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# THE GREYHOUND

# Magazine



Vol. I No. 1 November 1988



## One student's journey into Nepal



Welcome to the first issue of **The Greyhound** newspaper's monthly supplement, **The Greyhound Magazine**.

This month's entire issue is devoted to the photojournalistic journey of one Loyola student's summer adventures in the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal. Senior, Jim Lo Scalzo spent eight weeks volunteering at the Nirmala leper colony in Dhanbad, India in 1987. Upon his return, a Loyola gallery show featuring 100 of his photographs, brought an awareness of the plight of the Nirmala lepers home to Baltimore. This year, Lo Scalzo took his services to the banks of the holy Bagmati river in Kathmandu, Nepal. There, while working with Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity, Lo Scalzo discovered the horrifying wonders of Hinduism. In this issue, Lo Scalzo brings these wonders back to Loyola. Lo Scalzo will be showing his complete collection of Nepal photographs in a gallery show to be held at Loyola next spring.

Lo Scalzo is now working to raise money to return to Nepal for a seven-month stay after he graduates. He plans to continue his volunteer work and spend two months directing a documentary.

**The Greyhound Magazine** will return December 5th with its first set of regular departments. **The Greyhound Magazine** will be featuring in-depth articles focusing on both campus and national issues. Departments will include both reports from Loyola's schools and majors as well as some creative pieces.

**The Greyhound Magazine** staff welcomes suggestions and submissions from the Loyola community. Please forward all correspondence to **The Greyhound** newspaper office, 100 W. Cold Spring rm. T4W x2352. Enjoy this issue and we will see you again December 5th.

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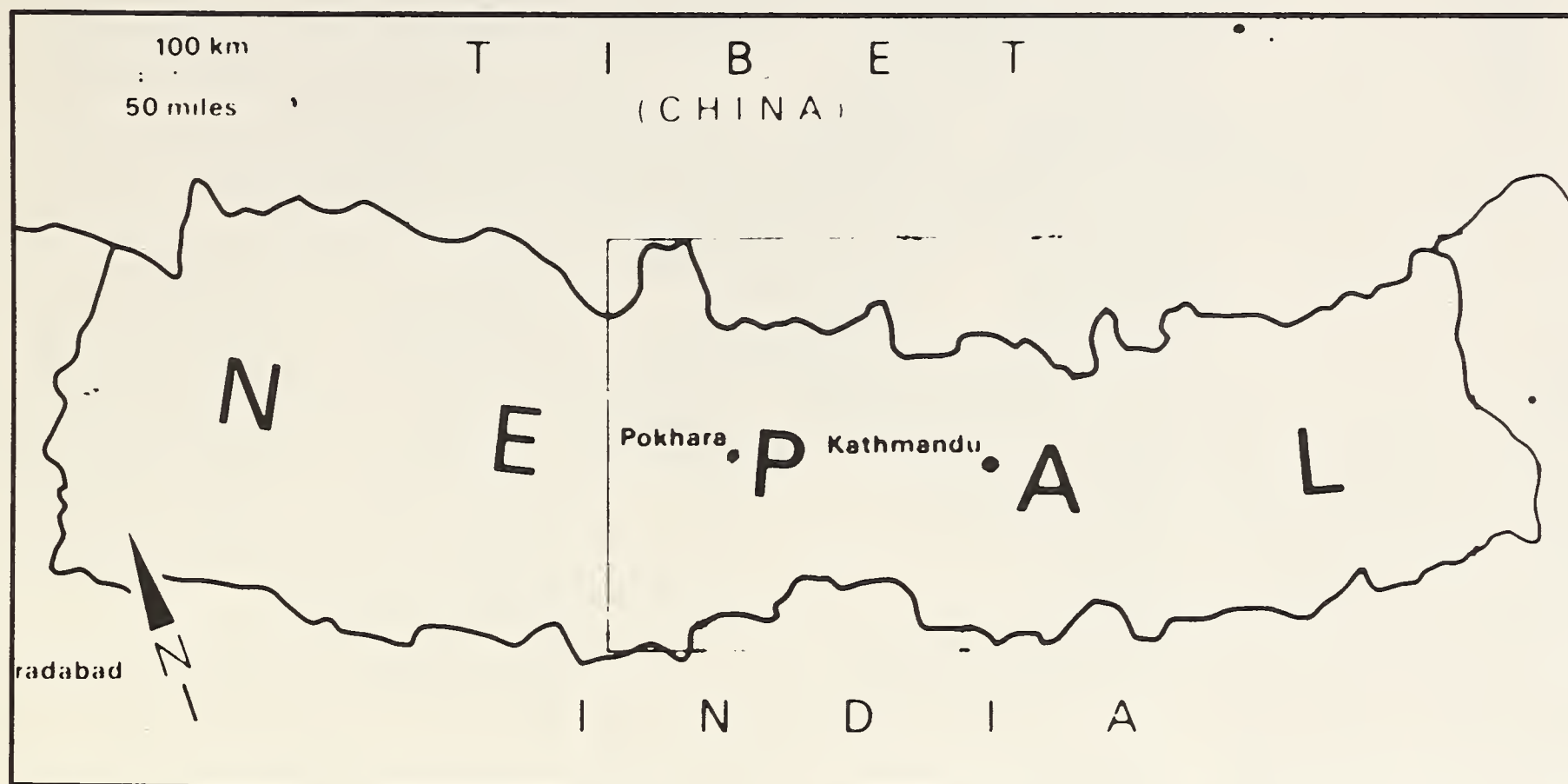
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# NEPAL AT A GLANCE



## Prologue

I can remember gliding my finger over the bump Mt. Everest made on the globe in my sixth grade geography class. When you're ten years old there's no question that the biggest lump on the globe resides in a cool country. So I memorized the name and the next time my friends and I played car quiz I said, "I've got one, where's the biggest mountain range in the world?"

They shrugged their shoulders and stuck out their lower lips. "Glen Burnie?"

"Glen Burnie! You idiots.....Nepal! It's in Nepal! Haven't you ever heard of Nepal?" My friends looked at me as though I had lobsters coming out of my ears.

Over the next ten years Nepal aroused in me an intense fascination. I studied its land and its people. I dreamed of walking the streets of Kathmandu, of climbing the Himalayas, of running from the Abominable Snowman. I listened to Bob Segar say he was going down there, and Cat Stevens claim that he'll soon be going too. "It's the last shangrila on earth," an acquaintance told me after visiting for a week. "There's no way I can describe it to you. You must see it for yourself."

Last winter I was finally able to land a contact in Nepal with a few Jesuits. Through them I made arrangements to work with Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity for two months. On May 8th of this year, I flew into Kathmandu.

All that I had imagined, all that I had looked forward to, was there. Nepal brought to life my dream of experiencing an ancient culture uncorrupted by western technology. Nothing, however, prepared me for the man I was to meet.

I never knew his name, "Names are relative," he said, so I called him by his title, -- Sadhu. A sadhu is a wandering holy man dedicated to meditation and prayer. He belongs to no congregation, conducts no services and has no hierarchial rank over another man's spirituality. The sadhu is, in Hindu belief, set aside by his own renouncement of worldly affairs.

There are many peculiar sects of sadhus in both India and Nepal. Some practice human sacrifice and cannibalism, some conquest pain by devious forms of physical torture (keeping a hand raised until it shrivels, burying oneself alive). Some even claim to have the power of alchemy and levitation. The sadhu I befriended however, was merely a practitioner of austerity and wisdom. "Penance and self-denial rid my body of sin," he told me one evening as the sun was setting quietly behind his temple. "It will release my body from Sansara - the cycle of birth, death and re-birth."

My sadhu was eventually able to sneak me in to photograph bizarre sadhu rituals never before seen by western eyes. Our experiences together climaxed in a fantastic journey into the Himalayas to partake in a ritual involving the sacrifice of hundreds of animals.

Everything I've written in this story is true. Though the sequence of events has been altered, it must be regarded, in essence, as fact. Those that find certain rituals offensive should keep in mind that they are venerable features of the Hindu culture.

As for Mt. Everest, well, to be honest I never did get to see it. I had a chance on my flight in, but guess who was on the wrong side of the plane.



# THE HOLY MEN OF KATHMANDU

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JIM LO SCALZO

I could see by my watch, without twisting my hand off the left grip of the handlebars, that it was eight thirty in the morning. An hour before I had been searching the streets of Kathmandu for the sacred temple of Pashupati. But somehow the dirt brown pagoda buildings that cram themselves inside the city line gave way to scattered villages and a single gravel road, so I hopped off my bike and walked it next to some buildings. I figured I was half way to Tibet by now and might end up on the side of some mountain with a Himalayan climbing expedition if I didn't ask directions.

I stopped in front of an old man with reddish-brown skin. His eyes were squinted and his face was wrinkled, except for his cheekbones which shone as if sanded down by years of wind. A skinned goat hung by its neck along side him. There were Yak heads too, and some other parts that could have been from any small animal. The Nepali had been chopping on a tree stump and was now staring at me.

"Pashupati Temple?" I asked, holding up my arms and shrugging my shoulders.

"Pashupati," he repeated quickly, his teeth dangling yellow and crooked.

"Yes, Pashupati Temple?" I asked again.

He spit in a thin stream and stood up with the help of a black wooden cane. The cane was hand carved with faces adorning the front and some sort of bird on top that was being worn away by his twitching thumb.

"Eh, eh, eh, Pashupati," he laughed, pointing to the left of the road I came in on. He arched his arm when he pointed as if to say "man it's waaaaaayyy over there." I figured when I left he'd go tell his buddies and I'd be the laughing stock of the village for the next two weeks. I thanked him for his help and he waved his cleaver at some of his meat.

I shook my head. I was hungry, but not quite enough for Yak head on a stick.

An hour later I began passing Hindu pilgrims, all of whom were headed in the same direction. This was what I had been looking for. Every year hundreds of thousands of Hindu pilgrims undertake long and strenuous journeys to visit Pashupati Temple, a source of divine attraction. It is the most famous temple of Nepal, built for Lord Pashupatinath, the patron deity of the kingdom. Nearly two thousand years old, the temple is reknown for its art and architecture, they are masterpieces of the great art that flourished in the Kathmandu Valley centuries ago.

Many legends are related to the shrine of Pashupatinath and the wish fulfillment of worshipers. According to local belief it has the power of alchemy which turns all kinds of metal into gold.

The road before the entrance was narrow and downhill. Eucalyptus trees were on both sides, cooling the air that was already pushing ninety degrees. The main gate loomed enormous in front of me. On top of it were carvings of Shiva (the creator and destroyer) and Parvati (his wife) sitting on Mt. Kailas in what I'll call a rather amorous pose.

I entered the complex for a full seven seconds before being thrown on my rear end just outside the gate. The guard who did the tossing pointed to a small red and white sign to the left of the entrance that read: "Hindus only beyond this point." I was in no mood to apologize and instead asked for directions to the Sisters of Charity Mission House.

"You come to work?" he asked. I nodded yes and he pointed to a low red-brick building across the street that looked as ancient as the temple itself.

Walking through its open gates I found myself in a large open court yard. In the center, resting on a square, twenty foot tall pedestal were five white temples. Elderly people were scattered everywhere. Some lay on the steps, looking up at the auburn monkeys that swung from the temple's arches. Others

walked about like zombies, mumbling to themselves and toiling with their hair.

The sick and dying come to Pashupati not just for the temple itself, but for the river it is built on. It is called the Bagmati, the sacred river of Nepal. The Hindus believe that to dip both feet in the river before they die will cleanse their spirits. There are also four cremation ghats that jut out from the temple and onto the river. To have your body burned there is to let your soul travel with your ashes; up the Bagmati and directly to the gods.

Entering the building I saw it was nothing more than a long and narrow hallway with beds against each wall. One of Mother Teresa's Sisters was scrubbing the floor in the center aisle. I recognized her from the traditional blue and white sari. I introduced myself and told her I was here to volunteer for the Sisters for two months. She smiled and handed me the scrub cloth.

I worked as fast as I could so I could speak with the Sisters but when I finished she was right behind me, swinging nail clippers between her fingers.

"Oh thanks," I said, "But I cut my nails before I came." She smiled again and motioned her head for me to begin.

The patients were outside eating rice and potatoes from metal tins. The food and saliva dripped from their fingers. I looked back down at the silver clippers. The pinchers were curved, smiling at me.

I finished two hours later and walked into the Sister's one room office by the entrance of the courtyard. It had a green plastic floor board with curtains of the same color teetering over the windows. The walls were bare except for an Indian calendar with a photo of the ocean. The water looked cool and inviting. I put the clippers on her shelf while she tinkered her keys.

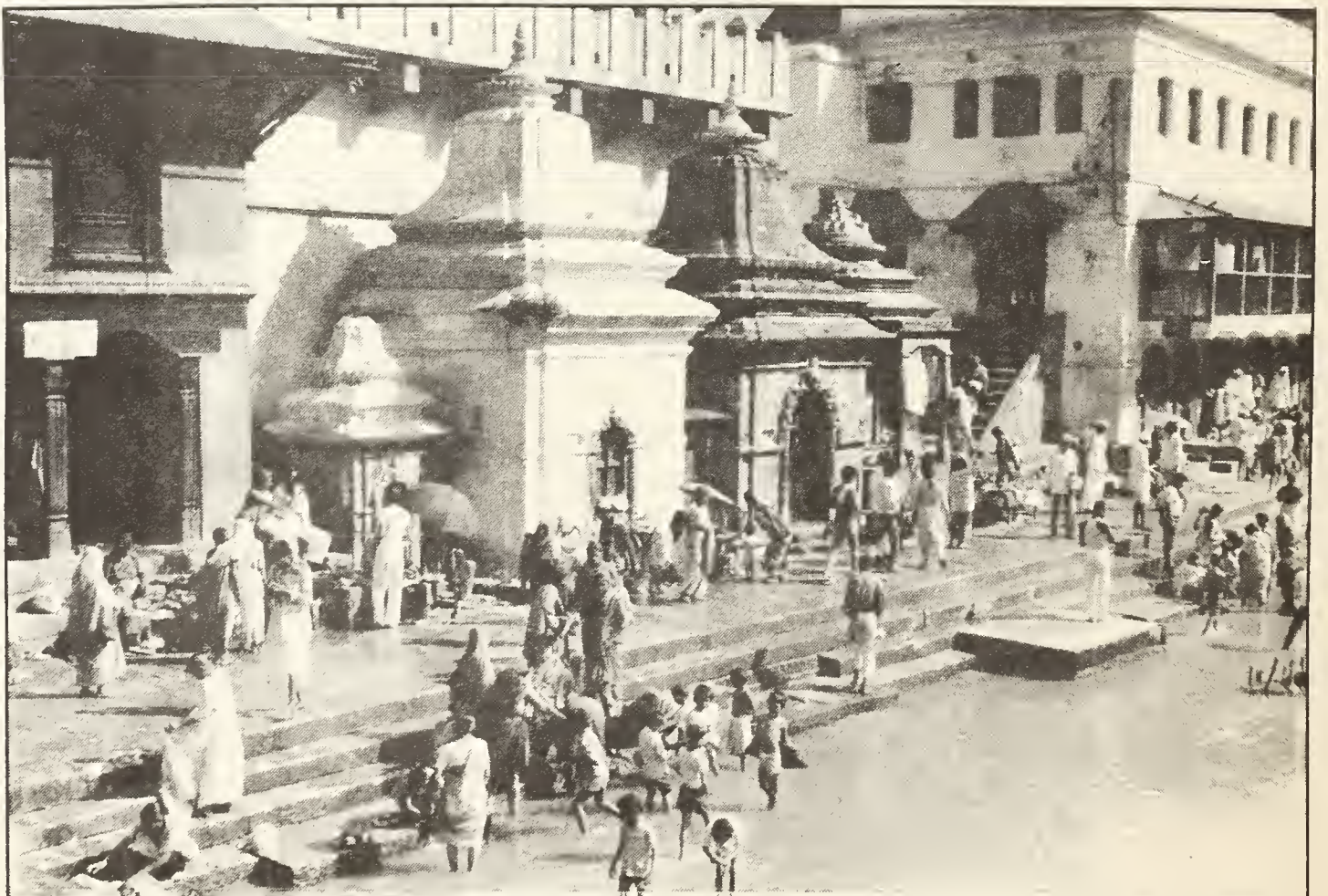
"Time to go," she said. "We leave here 12:30. Tomorrow you come 8:30?" I nodded. "Good, we work everyday except Wednesday 8:30 to 12:30." She locked the door behind us and walked briskly for the exit. My mind raced with questions.

"Ahh, how many sisters work here?" I yelled to her.

"Two," she said and turned the corner.

Of course I got lost again on the way to my second day of work at Pashupati. This time though I left earlier to account for miss-direction and made it to the mission by eight thirty. The sister I had spoken to the previous day was just entering her room. I stepped in behind her.

"Good morning," she said, "I didn't get your name yesterday." I answered happily and she told me her name was Sister Cecelia. "I arrived (from Calcutta) six months ago," she said. "This is Sister Emily." She pointed behind me to the sister I hadn't met the day before. Sister Emily greeted me cordially and left the room with a bucket and towel.



Hindu worshippers at the Pashupati Temple bathe in the sacred waters of the Bagmati River.





A tuberculosis victim at the Sisters mission in Pashupati grieves over the death of his bunkmate.

"Did you train under Mother Teresa?" I asked Sister Cecilia.

"Yes, for two years, then we are assigned to mission."

"Did you get to choose?" I asked. She frowned slightly. "Are you happy here?"

"I don't have a choice," she said, "I have to be." She fingered the rosary which hung from her neck. I was flattered by her sincerity and didn't know how to reply. How do you comfort someone whose job is to comfort others? "This is where I'm from," she said, staring at the calendar picture of the ocean. "It's Goa, in Southern India." I told her I had heard of it and was even admiring the picture the day before. She smiled proudly.

Both Sisters talked to me about the mission as we scrubbed the floor. This was a task we would have to do every day since the patients were always bringing in mud, spitting and dropping their food. There are 52 patients, most suffering from tuberculosis, others from typhoid, leprosy and retardation. All are aged and all are near death.

In order to scrub the floors we had to pull the beds from the walls. This was an easy task since all the patients were in the courtyard waiting for their meals. All that is, except for one who sat Indian style in the last bed on the left.

"He can barely walk," Sister Cecilia told me. "T.B. has taken all his strength, you must carry him." The old man gleamed as if he understood. He had a long gray-black beard that concealed most of his face. The lines around his eyes were deep and jagged. He smiled and held out his arms.

What I thought would be a hefty load must not of weighed over 120 lbs. I walked with him in my arms through the corridor, ducking the bleached white mosquito nets that hung from the roof. It wasn't until I got a good strong whiff of him that I started to jog. His beard began flopping in my face. It smelled as if he hadn't bathed since the last time he shaved. For a second I thought I might drop him and

gag. But then I made it outside and quickly rested him on the ground. His forearm slid warm and oily across the back of my neck. He clasped his hands together in front of his face and said loudly, "dhanyabaad," Nepali for thank you.

After we fed the patients (always rice and potatoes) and helped them wash their tins Sister Emily and I boiled up a two gallon drum of water to make their milk. It was powdered, obviously, and always left a little watery for conservation purposes.

Distributing the milk became my favorite part of work with the Sisters. You feel things, holding a hot cup of milk while a dying human drinks, in a way that is completely different from any other. Watching them eat, it is easy to lapse into a state of mind similar to that of a television observer. You're not really there, you have no control over the situation, and whether you leave or stay the show will continue, scene by boring scene.

When you help them drink the screen disappears. You're assisting the person through direct contact. You're a part of the scene, not just an observer, and the sense of identification is staggering. When their hands grasp mine that hold the cup and pull it to their lips, they're no longer actors - they become real people with real presence, close enough for me to outstretch my finger and touch their cheek, close enough for me to make a difference. And the whole time I'm a part of their consciousness too. I could feel this when I concentrated, and then found myself feeling more; feeling how they hurt, feeling what it meant to be alone and scared. It was so real, those few moments, that sometimes I would even feel like I was dying too.

All this I could experience just by closing my eyes and reversing the situation in my mind, so that it was my hands wrapping around theirs. So that it was my lips depending on their ability to guide the milk to them. So that it was my mouth waiting to drink.

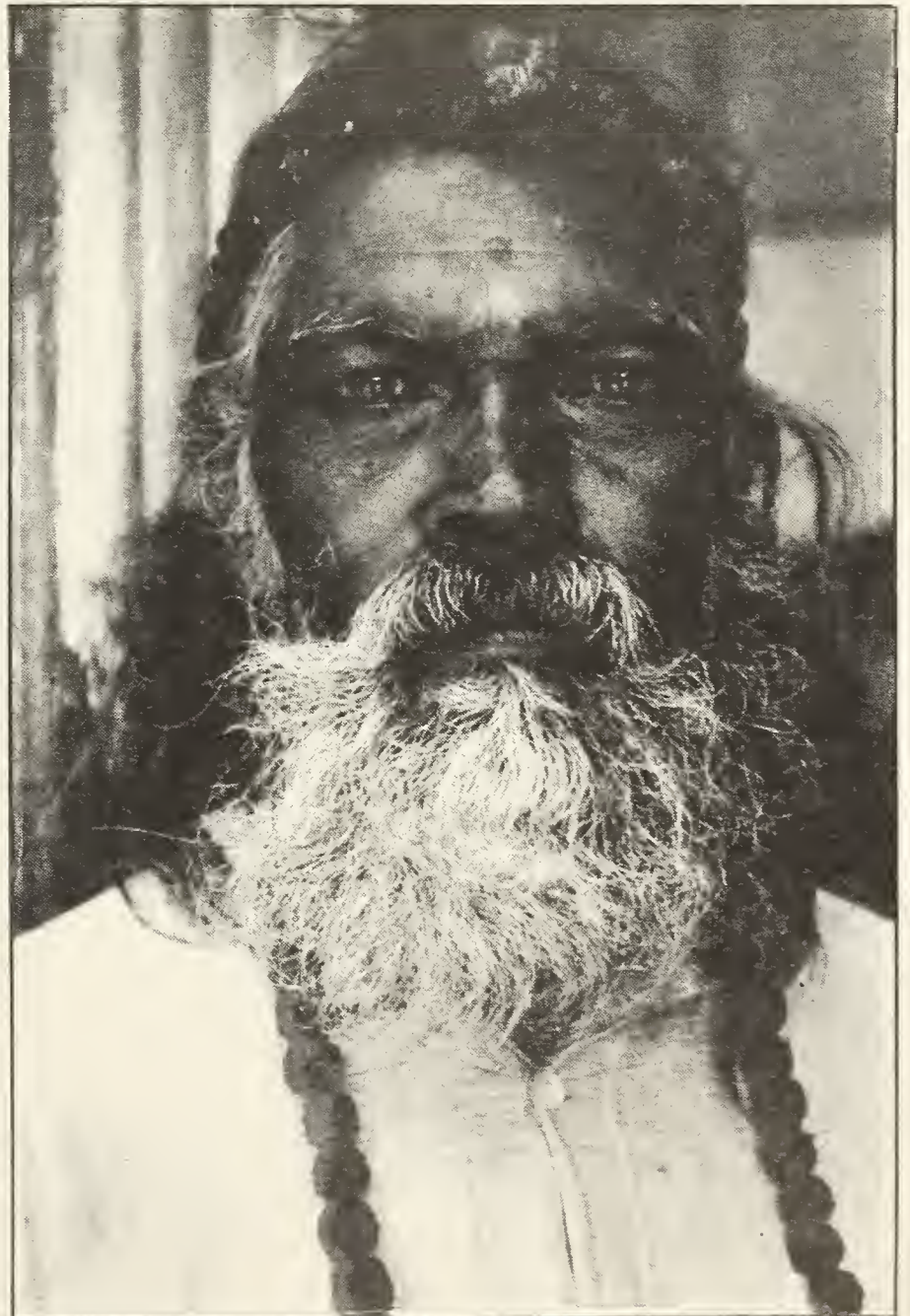
After work I went back to the Pashupati Temple. This time I crossed a small foot bridge that led over the Bagmati. There was a cremation in progress on one of the funeral pyres. The corpse's skin had already burned off and now a moist layer of fat was fizzling into a thick blue smoke. A worker pierced the skull with a sharpened bamboo pole to prevent the head from exploding with the heat.

When trying to remove his implement from the skull he accidentally broke off the head. He slid it off the pole and placed it back on the fire, peering back and forth to see if anyone had noticed.

I turned around and climbed about 100 ft. of steps to some shrines than hung precariously over the bank. From up there I could gaze across the river and into the forbidden temple's complex where hundreds of Hindus were worshipping and praying.

I had been getting a little overwhelmed by the pollution and poverty that run rampant in the busy streets of Kathmandu. The World Bank ranks Nepal as the fourth poorest country in the world. And the high rate of population growth (doubling time is about thirty years) has already begun to outstrip food production in the Valley. But from where I sat, on the shores of the sacred Bagmati, directly across from one of the holiest deities in Asia, it was easy to shade my eyes and fall back into history, becoming totally immersed in the sounds and imageries of the medieval period. This is what Nepal is famous for.

"Hey Babu," a voice called from behind me, "one photo seven rupees." I turned around and saw an old holy man leaning against one of the shrines. He was strikingly handsome and wore an olive pit necklace around his forehead. It flattened his long and straight gray-black hair around his head like a hippie's bandanna. Two more olive pit necklaces hung from his neck and underneath his beard. He looked familiar, but I couldn't place him. I stared at him aggravated. I had seen hun-



The Sadhu from Pashupati in one of only 3 photos he allowed to be taken.





**After bathing in the Bagmati a young Nepali girl prepares to dry in the sun on the steps of the Pashupati Temple.**

dreds of old men with beards, but this one had a unique gentleness about him. It was the shape of his eyes I think, almond shaped, the tips of which were raised as if being pushed up by the brightest smile you've ever seen. But his mouth was straight as a ruler.

"O.K., five rupees photo," said the holy man.

"Fine," I said. I hadn't brought any film for my camera but figured this would be a good way to get him off my back. I clicked off four frames with my motor drive.

He held out his hand and said, "twenty rupees."

"No no," I said, "five."

"I heard four photos," he replied, "that's twenty."

"No no no, you didn't hear four, that was just one long one." I pointed to some yellow and red paint on his forehead to get off the subject. "What's this?" I asked.

"This means Shiva. I am holy man."

"Why are you begging," I asked.

"Because, man I am a sadhu...a hermit. Sadhus must

give up all money, all belongings to Shiva and beg for food." The old man could see I was interested and it made him happy I think. He went on to explain that even as a "holy man" he had no higher rank over another man's spirituality. "In Hinduism each man have own personal relationship between himself and Shiva. Some relationship more demanding, some less. But each man have own rituals."

A sadhu's ritual intimacy and intense personalism can only be achieved through total concen-

tration in prayer. He explained that this meant they couldn't work, bathe, be sexually active, or even settle down in one place too long.

"So where do you sleep?" I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Sometimes caves, sometimes temples." He paused for a moment and then asked, "Maybe you can help me with English."

"So you can beg better?" I asked.

"So I can learn," he said. "You help me with speaking."

I had been asked this before



and always turned it down. But this time I made an agreement that I'd help him with English if he'd teach me about Sadhuism. He liked the idea and we said we'd meet at the same time and place tomorrow. I started walking down the steps towards my bike when he called to me: "Hey Babu, twenty rupees."

Two new Japanese volunteers showed up at work the next day: Yumi and Yuki (as in "you have a key"). They reminded me of an oriental Laurel and Hardy. Yumi was short plump and healthy. "You-key" on the other hand, was tall thin and pale. He wore one of those floppy cloth sun hats your mom used to make you wear at the beach. Sister Cecilia and I had a good laugh over it whenever he wasn't looking. "I have head cold," he explained.

We pulled the beds from the walls in order to scrub the floor, all except the last one that is. This time I let Yumi and Yuki carry out the old man. Half way down the corridor they started to jog. I stood by the entrance, holding the door open. As they ran by the old man called to me, "Hey Babu."

I couldn't believe my eyes. It was the sadhu! I hadn't recognized him without his face-paint and jewelry. His hair was also pulled back and tucked under his topi.

After work I waited in a field behind the mission for the sadhu to come out. Just after the Sisters left he stepped out the back door, his stride normal and healthy. I followed him over the Bagmati and up the steps opposite the Pashupati Temple.

"Hello Babu," he said when I finally revealed myself, "first lesson today?"

I shook my head in disbelief. "You're a fake," I said, "You're not sick at all, I can't believe this! You lied to the Sisters of Charity!" At this he became enraged. He slapped his cane against the cement and spoke rapid Nepali. "Speak English," I said.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked. "Do you know where I'm from? You know nothing man. A sadhu lives where he can. This time of year no-where to stay, no festivals, no rain, no food. Don't speak when you know nothing!"

That afternoon I biked to Thamel (a tourist district) and bought a book entitled, *Thirty Days To A Better Vocabulary*. It consisted of 30 half hour lessons that introduced new words and then quizzed you on them. I showed the sadhu my book the next day. He laid it on my lap and immediately began speaking.

"Sadhuism is tortuous," he said, "based on self denial and penance. Ancient philosopher Manu set our objectives. He say in summer let sadhu expose himself to heat of five fires, during monsoon live under the open sky, and in winter wear no clothes to increase his austerities."

"Let him leave home to wander alone to obtain liberation. Let him not desire to die, let him not desire to live, let him wait for his time, as a servant for the pay of wages."

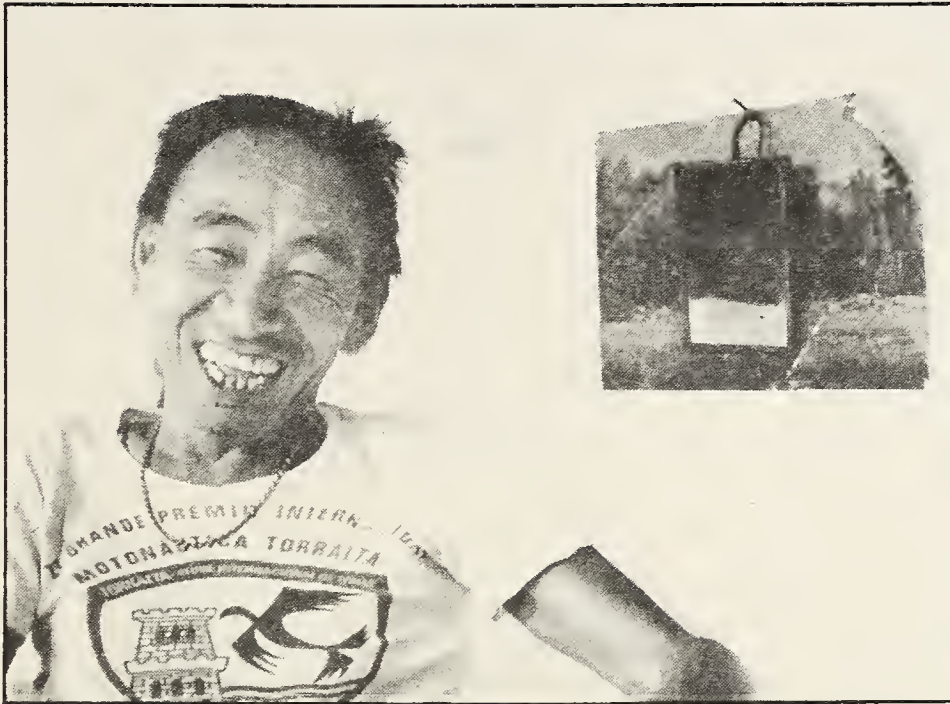
The sadhu spoke and spoke and I sat motionless and wide eyed, letting his words circulate through my body. He spoke until the sky grew pink and a cool pre-evening breeze came in from the mountains. It blew through

his beard so that I could smell the age in his hair, the wispy remains of a thousand years past.

The next five weeks were the same routine. I ended up working with the sadhu about three times a week. I was learning a lot about Sadhuism even though he had a habit of diverting from his teachings on to some philosophical tangents that usually went in one ear and out the other.

My daily work with the patients at Pashupati brought me close to only a select few - those who were mentally competent enough to understand the purpose behind my visits. The others, it seemed, recognized

ful thing to watch, let alone to live. I had trouble staying in those halls long enough just to scrub them down and I'm not claustrophobic in the least. How excruciating then it must be to sit there all day, aware of a beautiful world outside, yet imprisoned in a body unable to transport you away from the heat and stuffiness, the stare of human vegetables, the complete lack of experience for thought and the only stimulation for the senses being the smell of burning flesh drifting in from the cremation ghats on the Bagmati; knowing you are in line, at the back of the line, somewhere, and all you can do is wait your turn.



Yama Chepang rests next to the mirror he uses to escape the confinement of the mission.

my face but were completely oblivious to my presence. I had at least built up enough trust with them to let me work on a one on one basis. When, for example, I worked with one of these patients all day, washing their clothes and sheets, bathing them, cutting their hair, etc...they seemed aware as to what was going on. But as soon as the experience was over they climbed back to the security of their bed and stared blankly at the same piece of ceiling, the mornings events already forgotten.

I sometimes wondered who was worse off, those who were lacking the marbles in their attic or the few that had a complete set. At least those who weren't aware of where they were seemed more or less content. Those who were aware seemed content on the surface, but after so many weeks of interaction I noticed an anguish that burned deep.

Lama Chepang has been at the mission for three months. At 53 he is completely debilitated by TB. It has grotesquely humped his spine, drained his legs too thin to walk, but so far has left his mind unaffected. From his bed he would sit and watch us work. "What time is it?" he would ask every half hour. I'd tell him and he'd nod his head as if he had some appointments to attend, some people to meet.

When the patients are fed, they eat in the front courtyard. Lama however, crawls to the back-door and sits on the stoop, six feet from his bed and at the limit of his mobility. There he eats and there his mind wanders, alone from the other patients. This, I'm sure, is the highlight of his day.

The confinement of a mind that seeks knowledge is a pain-

On the wall next to Lama's bed is taped a magazine photo of a wonderfully large lake surrounded by pine trees. My guess would be from either Wyoming or Colorado. Anyway, right in the middle of this picture he has nailed a tiny mirror. I would see him staring into it from time to time, but I never realized the importance of this image until one day when I was running buckets to the other end of the corridor. Lama was sitting at the edge of his bed, staring into the mirror. And as I walked behind him I glanced over his shoulder and for a moment saw what he saw. In some eerie way the mirror actually made him look like he was a part of the scene. The glass was just large enough so that his face filled the frame. And there he was, floating above the waterline, his image embedded in the pines.

After lunch Lama would crawl from the stoop back to his bed. My work was usually over by this point so I enjoyed sitting with him for a while and giving him some intellectual conversation. "What time is it?" he'd ask just before I'd leave. I'd tell him and he'd nod and gaze out the window where the pilgrims walked and some local children played. This is the way I'll always remember him, and this is the way he is right now, right at this very moment. Staring, wondering, waiting.

After work with the Sisters my afternoons were free. I spent most of this time photographing the people of the Valley for an upcoming gallery show. But once I got into a routine, I found picture taking to be exceptionally laborious. And if you're anything less than a giggling moron while taking portraits of people who don't appreciate the friendly side of photography you

better be able to either:

A) Appreciate being hit on the head with beads

B) Know how to flee a pagoda in under three seconds

or C) Change your photo essay to the Himalayan butterfly and its pretty colors.

At least with "C" you'll get more subjects, and if lucky catch one smiling.

So in order to obtain a photographic piece of mind and also to utilize a wider variety of environment and culture I varied my photo time and eventually covered life throughout the Valley at every hour of the day.

In between photo journeys I got caught up on all the books I felt too guilty to read during the school year. I also liked to drift in and out of some of the more unusual shops. Where else can you buy bowls made of human skulls?

One shopping area that I liked to frequent in particular is on Freak Street (named for all the lingering western hippies that came to Nepal in the late 60's for its drug legality). The area has earned the title "thieves market," and is where, according to locals, you can find one of anything in the world. It is also where any photography equipment of mine found missing would soon turn up. Therefore, I never went to buy, but rather for the humor (and satisfaction) of watching other people getting ripped off.

It is here that one day I was fortunate enough to witness a scam destined for the Rip Off Hall of Fame. And if there is no Rip Off Hall of Fame this incident could start one.

I was drinking an orange Fanta on the steps of a refreshment stand next door to one of the more popular stores for obtaining hard to find goods. In pulls what has to be the only antique car in Nepal, a real old fashioned beauty. Perfect in all respects except for a single missing hub cap.

The driver was British and I guess so was his car. He parked it in front of the store next to me and went to have a talk with one of the store's merchants. Traffic is quite loud in Nepal but I was able to pick up enough sentences to tell what was going on.

The Brit had the car shipped into Nepal two years ago when he was stationed here from Whales. The front right hub cap had been lost (the one under the drivers seat since they drive on the opposite side) and he has been unable to find a replacement that can match the others. He was talking about all the places he had searched when the merchant stopped him.

"EH!" the merchant interrupted, "We've got one."

The Brit looked dumfounded. "You're kidding," he mumbled.

"Yes yes," the merchant reassured him and called one of his assistants. He explained to the assistant what they were looking for and the assistant nodded and walked through a crutained doorway. A minute later he walked out with a sparkling new hub cap wrapped in plastic. The Brit unwrapped it and examined it up and down.

"Bloody hell!" he yelled, "exactly what I want!" And it was, from what I could see of the one on the car, an exact match. I'm not sure how many bills exchanged hands but I think the





Hashish addict prepares to smoke from her pipe.





One of hundreds of village merchants sells vegetables in Kathmandu's "Pig alley."



A Newari girl from Patan, a southern district of Kathmandu, washes dishes in the courtyard outside her home.



merchant asked for 2000 rupees (\$95.00). The Brit paid happily and banged on the new hub cap with his fist. He stepped back and glanced at it for a few moments before turning his car around and driving back the way he came. I had a view of the other side of the car now, and a view of his smiling face through the passenger seat window. That's the way he drove off, exuberant but dignified, completely unaware that his front left tire was now bare. The poor slob had just paid a hundred bucks for his own hub cap.

The sadhu and I finished the vocabulary book in late June, almost six weeks from the date we started. It was on a Wednesday which meant there had been no work at Pashupati so we began and finished the lesson early. There were no exuberant proclamations as to the completing of the book. Instead I laid it on the rock in front of us and we watched Hindu worshippers bathing their children on the other side of the Bagmati.

"I'm going to be heading for Bhaktapur," said the sadhu. "But I'll stick around here until you fly out on Sunday. . . I'm becoming too settled here. If I stay any longer I'll lose too much thought on reflection."

"Why Bhaktapur?" I asked.

"Well, it's the only major city I haven't lived in. . . . I feel I should see them all before retiring to the hills and meditation. Like Madra Baba, he didn't become one of the greatest Yoga masters by living in Kathmandu all his life."

"Who?" I asked.

"Madra Baba, he's a sadhu like myself. Been all over Asia. Each country has their own beliefs, their own truths. If you visit many each country contributes its piece of the truth, its piece of the right way to live. In Madra's case they add to Yoga. He can do positions that no one else in the world can do."

"Where's this Madra Baba now?" I asked.

The sadhu turned around and pointed to a tiny one room cement house on top of the hill adjacent to Pashupati. I had seen it before and always thought it was part of the complex of smaller temples.

"He lives up there?"

"Yup."

"Can I see him perform?"

"No man."

"Why not? I want to see this."

"Because man, you can't just do it, it takes meditation. And besides you're a westerner."

"Oh come on!" I snapped. "I could pass for a Nepali, you said so yourself."

The sadhu gazed back up to Madra's room. "How much rupees do you have?"

I pulled three one hundred rupee notes from my pocket and showed it to him. He grabbed them from my hands and shoved them down the front of my pants.

"Leave it there until I tell you," he said.

"My camera? What about my camera? I have to shoot this."

"You leave it in the bag unless I say so. He might not like it."

We climbed the hundred or so feet of steps that led to the top of the hill and to the door of Madra's room. It had the tiered roof of a temple. Wooden 'intels above the entrance were ornamented with carved snakes, vines and demons in carnal embrace. The door was just a

bunch of thick jagged branches tied together. In between the slats all I could see was black.

The sadhu pinched the underside of my chin and turned my head to face him. "Once inside you follow what I say, nothing more."

"Alright alright," I said and looked back at the door where two black eyes were now examining us from behind the slats.

"Oooooooooohhh hello," the hidden face groaned. "Come, come inside." The doors opened saloon style from the middle and we stepped in.

The room was about twelve feet long and eight feet wide. Smoke from five candles had so deeply fogged the room that I couldn't see much. Madra left the door open and the smoke was now swirling out.

made of lotus seeds and human teeth.

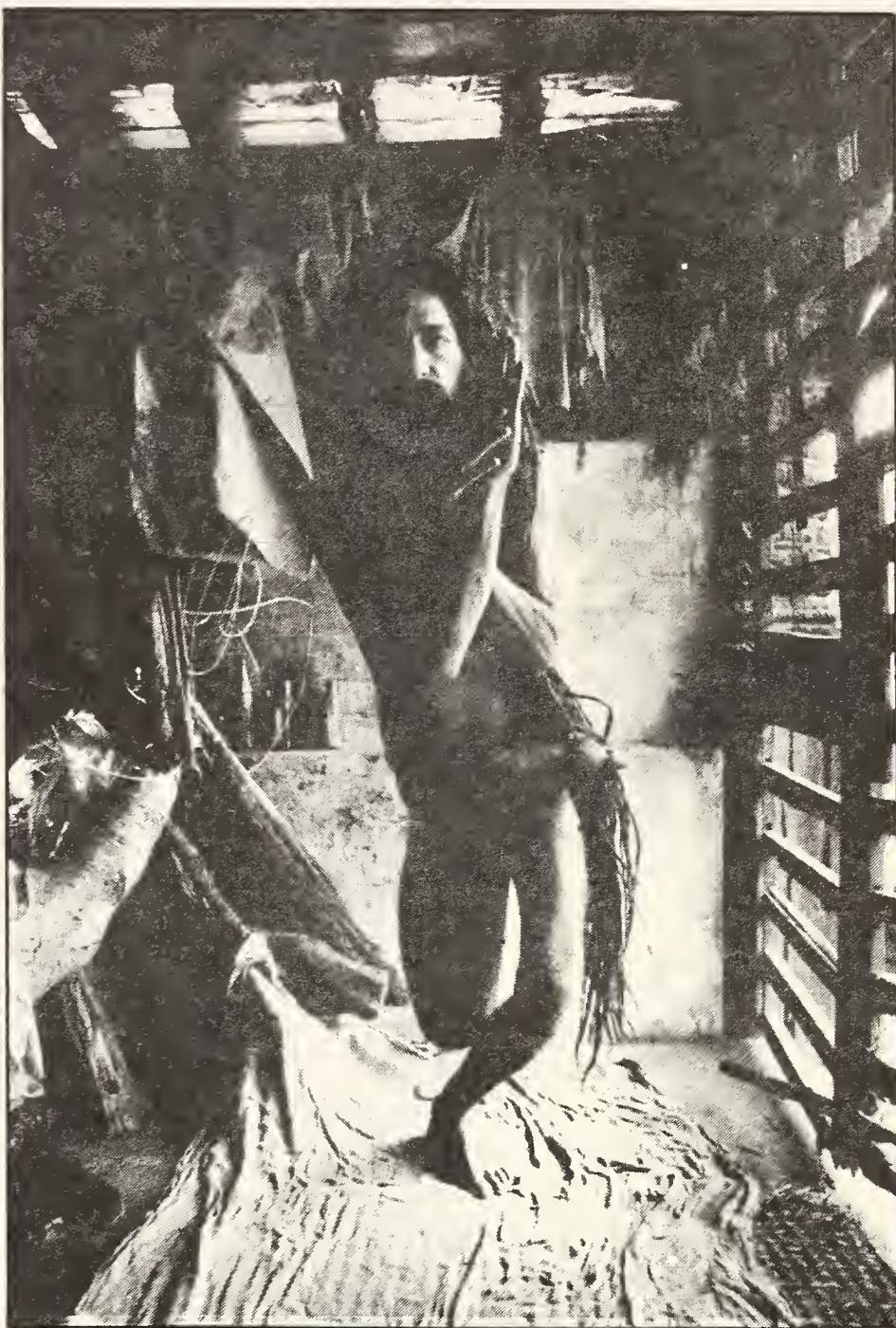
"Yoooooooouu.....Indian?" he asked.

"He's Nepali," the sadhu interrupted. "from Bhundipur. Been in Kathmandu two years."

"Oooooooooohhh....you like?" he asked referring to his house.

"Oh yea, it's cozy."

Looking around the room I saw it was crammed with more sacred relics than in all of Kathmandu's curio shops. Holes were dug out of the walls where human skulls lay crooked and rotting. Underneath the heads the walls were adorned with beads and Hindu paintings, ancient scrolls and prayer flags. On the floor were brass urns, wooden staffs, begging bowls and the yellowing pages from a holy chanting book. In the very center Madra had built a tiny shrine, in front of which stood a



**Madra Baba demonstrates his superiority at hatha yoga (yoga aimed at the senses) with one of 84 positions. The full length of his hair hugs the left side of his body.**

"This is friend from Pashupati," the sadhu told Madhu. "He very much want to meet you."

I was still standing when Madra grabbed my hand and sat me down next to him. Now that the smoke had cleared I got my first look at Madra and was immediately taken back by how young he was. I had expected to see some old geezard with a long white beard and wrinkles of wisdom. Instead, Madra looked about forty. He was a scrawny little guy with a terrifically possessed face, the kind you imagine to be behind the bars of the violent ward of the loony asylum. He wore only a loincloth around his waist and a necklace

three headed statue. The heads were those of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. Behind the statue was a square cut out of the floor filled with ash, dried flowers and candles.

"May we see some yoga?" the sadhu asked.

"Oooooooooohhhh, there's a sadhu I know, one I know well," Madra said, referring to himself in the third person. "Maybe this sadhu show some Yoga, maybe if you make him happy. This sadhu, he need money maybe to eat. He show Yoga, 84 positions, some he and he only can do. Maybe if you give him money for medicine he will let you see. He sick sadhu, very thin."

"Maybe if I can take pictures

I'll give money," I said.

"Oooooooooohhh, you give money for pictures, this sadhu need money. He say you make him happy." I just kept nodding, hoping Madra would get on with it already. I was beginning to feel a little uncomfortable. It wasn't the way he spoke but the way he looked at me, as if he saw right through my eyes and into my head and was reading my entire life story; every word spoken, every sin ever committed.

Finally he stood up and closed the wooden doors.

"First we pray to Shiva," Madra said. "Shiva is god." He took a handful of ash from the shrine and rubbed it into his forehead, then mine and the sadhu's. "This is ash of the dead," he continued. ".....from cremations outside. This life just an illusion. Death is real awakening into afterlife. We worship the dead." Madra then sat down, closed his eyes and began chanting. I nudged the sadhu and pointed to my camera bag, he nodded it was o.k.

I loaded my only roll of 400 film (b&w) and took a few shots of his room and him praying. Then Madra reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out a plastic bag stained mud brown. From inside the bag he pulled out a cube of raw hashish. It was moist and black, like tar. He put it between his palms and held it over his face.

Madra opened his mouth and squeezed out the juice from the hash. It looked thick and rancid like two day old coffee. Then Madra stuck the cube on the toothpick and dried it over a match. I photographed him as he stuffed the dry hash into a long vertical pipe and covered the mouth hole with an old rag. He took two quick inhales followed by one long one and held it out to me.

"No smokey maybe no show," Madra said. "Three times for Shiva." I glanced over to the sadhu who nodded.

A few moments later Madra put away his pipe and began stretching. He tightened the thin cloth around his waist and let his hair down. It hung in corn rows all the way to his ankles. He sat down and was about to begin when I noticed my light meter read one half of a second. When stabilized I can hold the camera still down to one eighth of a second, but anything below that would record too much movement.

"This is lotus," Madra said already beginning his yoga.

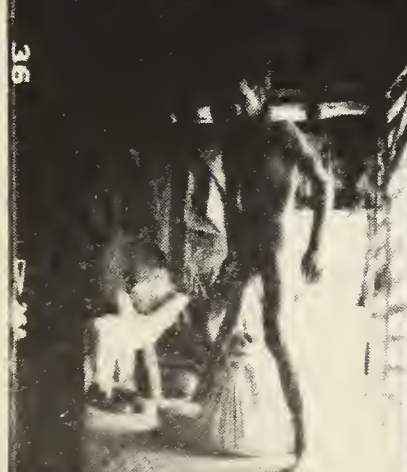
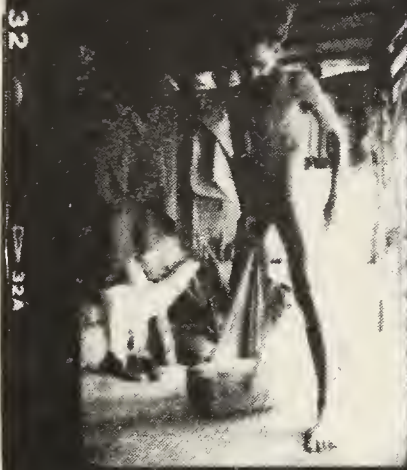
"Ah wait," I interrupted. "could you do positions next to door. There's more light there."

He moved without a gripe and started over. A hazy light came through the door slats and diffused evenly on the left side of his body. My shutter speed went back up to one fifteenth of a second. I remained sitting and leaned the right side of my body against the wall for more stability. At 28mm. I was just able to squeeze in the entire scene.

I was shooting a single frame for each position Madra managed to tie himself in. The sadhu leaned over to me and whispered, "you better save some of that film." I could tell by the steadiness with which he spoke that he wasn't kidding. Something big was coming up.

I only had nine frames left so I put the camera down and watched Madra do about thirty





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more positions. Finally he stood up and began pacing around the room. "Maybe you give this sadhu money, he show yoga, you take pictures, maybe he show penis trick if maybe you give money."

Penis trick? Did I hear him right? Madra babbled and paced a little longer before calling out the wooden door to some of his servants. A few moments later three men struggled through the door carrying a large cement block. They rested it on the floor and scurried out.

"What's the block for?" I whispered to the sadhu.

"He's going to lift it with his penis."

I grit my teeth, "What?"

"You know, his wiener."

"I know what a penis is. But how? How much does that weigh?"

"30 kg's."

"That's.....that's.....70 pounds!" The sadhu didn't reply any more in an effort to get me to shut up.

Madra tied his hair on top of his head and stripped completely naked. He took a handful of ash and rubbed his penis with it while chanting. Next, he pulled a stick from the shelf and began wrapping his penis around it, not spirally but rather so the penis overlapped itself. He rolled the stick until it came up to his pelvis and stretched it down another five inches. He rolled it up to his pelvis again, stretching it another five inches and rolled that up too. Then he started spinning the stick like someone winding up an airplane propeller. He did this three times, put the stick between his legs and stretched it up to his back.

The sadhu must have seen my jaw scraping the ground and pinched my waist. I remembered my camera and took a few pics of the final stretches. Madra rested in his chair for a moment before tying a cloth around the cement block. He tied it in a loop, squatted low and hung the top of the loop over his penis. Upon grabbing the end of his penis and standing straight up the cloth tightened, his penis stretched and the block hovered a good six inches off the ground.

I'll never forget the look of his upper body during the lift. Every bone, every muscle, every section of skin seemed to slide into his groin. At first his face was expressionless, then his jaw tightened and his eyes grew the slightest bit wider. It was as if their gaze had reversed direction and no longer saw me and the sadhu. Instead he saw into his own head and watched his body fuel itself on pain, watched his body turn agony into ecstasy. It was the gaze of a madman.

I took five photos of the lift and my last shot on the reel of him stumbling over the block in pain after he had completed.

The sadhu stood up and walked towards the door. "We go back to Pashupati now." Madra was just beginning to stand upright.

"Oooooohhh, don't go yet."

"Yea," I said, "what's your hurry?" The sadhu looked at me with rage in his eyes.

"I do yoga I need money....maybe you give me watch so I sell and maybe buy medicine."

"Give him watch and lets go now!" said the sadhu.

"Are you kidding?!" It was my lucky watch, a rugged Seiko

divers'adventurers watch, if Indiana Jones had a watch this would be the one. I reached in to the front of my pants and searched for the money the sadhu had stuffed down there.

"Ooohh....you lift rock too?"

"No, no, no," I said and pulled out the three hundred rupees. I put it in his hand and asked if I could come back.

"Three hundred rupees? I'm sick man, I need money, maybe you better give more."

"Babu comon!" the sadhu yelled from outside. I ignored him trying to be cordial to Madra so he'd let me come back. Madra started yelling to his servants in Hindi when the Sadhu grabbed me by the hair, pulled me through the doors and smacked the back of my head.

"What the hell's your problem?" I yelled. He rushed down the steps without a word and I followed close behind. "this watch is worth two hundred bucks." He turned around and slapped me again.

"What did I tell you? I say do what I say, nothing more!"

"I was trying to be friendly so I could go back." The sadhu shook his head violently.

"No.....no no you don't understand. He was setting you up with hash, the cop is waiting right there." He pointed to an armed guard not 100 ft. from Madra's entrance. "Don't you see man? If you didn't give more money his servants were going to get police to arrest you for pushing, buying, smoking, whatever they felt like. Madra is a sadhu just like me, we smoke legally. We have no danger. He sets you up for show, then you don't pay what he wants and get arrested and believe me man that'll be the last we'll ever hear of you."

"I'm sorry I didn't understand but listen we gotta go back."

"No."

"Come on you're not listening. Western eyes have never seen this kind of thing."

"You've got your film," he said with a voice feigning calmness.

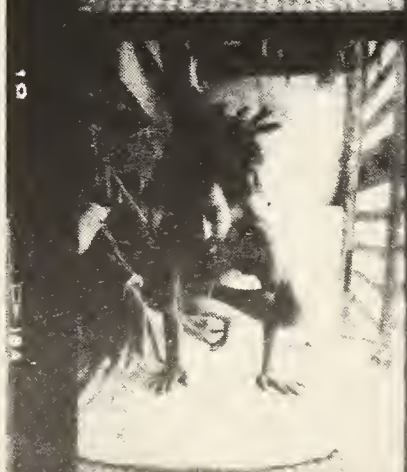
"Yea but this is black and white. Black and white is worthless now a days. I need it on color slide. We gotta go back tomorrow."

"You think cause you're an American you can get away with things. You're wrong! You don't know what they'd do to get an American in their hands."

"There's no danger and you know it!" I yelled this time and pointed at his face. He brushed past me and walked down the rest of the steps. I squatted down with the other Indians and watched the sadhu weave through a bustle of pilgrims on his way to the mission house.

I waited outside Madra's room for one hour after work the next day with 2 rolls of Fujichrome 400 in my camera bag and 5 hundred rupees down the front of my pants. The place seemed deserted and I was feeling hot and nervous and ready to leave. My bike had gotten a flat on the way to work which meant I'd have to push it home for two hours. I slumped down the steps, crossed the Bagmati foot bridge and had just begun the long walk home when I heard the Madra call to me. He was running down the hill I was walking up.

"I knew that maybe you'd come back. Leave leave," he said shaking his hand at my



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A peasant curls outside of the ancient Buddhist temple.

bike. I locked it to a tree and he took me by the hand and led me to the Bagmati.

We stopped in front of a Newari woman selling flowered garlands and different color face paint. He patted his hand in the red and spread it on my face.

"You friend. We worship Shiva together. Shiva is our god." Then he dipped the three middle fingers from the same hand into the yellow and ran them across my forehead.

"One line Brahma one line Vishnu one line Shiva." The yellow was a lot thinner than the red and I could feel three lines dripping down the left side of my face. He took my hand and escorted me up the steps to his room.

Madra went through the same rituals as the previous day. The only difference being the sadhu's absence. I shot a roll of him praying, smoking and performing various positions. While his servants brought in the rock I quickly re-loaded and photographed the stretching and the lift.

After the performance the room started getting a little hazy and I had to keep squinting my eyes to see straight. Red and yellow chips of paint were flaking off my face, causing a maniacal itch. While Madra dressed I stood up and leaned my back against the wall. The room spun from the center of the ceiling. I closed my eyes and tried to gain my balance.

"Oooooohhh," he started to moan. I remember thinking it sounded like the moo of a cow, a cow who outsmarted everyone by not eating so that he may never fall under his farmers knife and would be left to roam the pasture a scrawny king.

"I think maybe you over did it." I felt his fingers touch my chest and I jumped backwards.

**"He looked like Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai with his white beard and sandals, only we were going up, up along the hills that surround Kathmandu."**

My feet caught on the shrine and I fell down slow and clumsily.

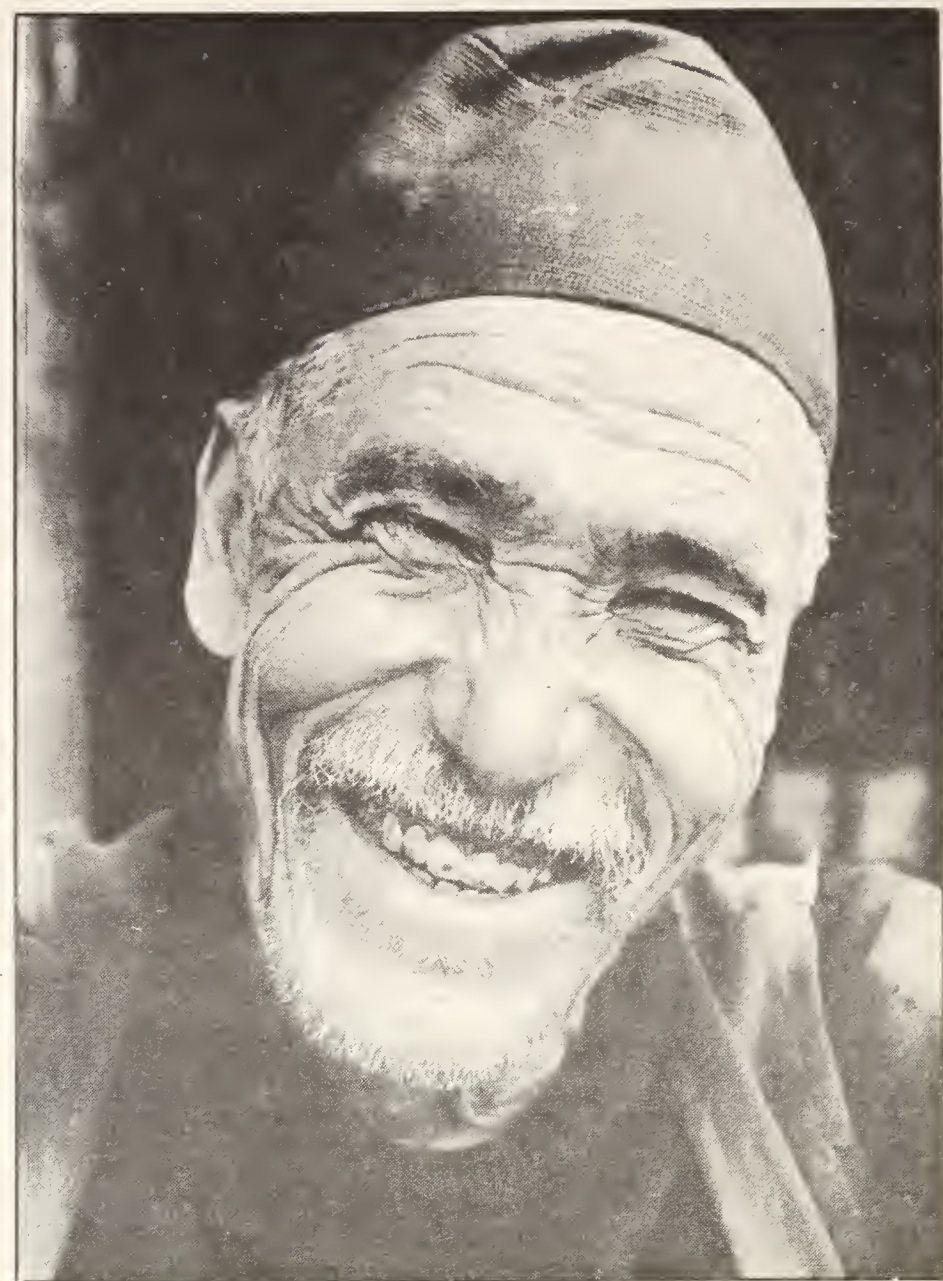
"Maybe you better stay for a long time." He laughed his broken laugh and pointed to my bare wrist. "Where's watch?" I ignored him and tried to get to my feet. The sweat from my face was mixing with the paint and leaving red and orange drips on my shirt. "You no bring watch then maybe give me camera."

I tossed the five hundred rupees on his shrine. "That's all I've got."

"You me friend, you give me camera, no like money. Like camera take pictures, snappy snappy." While he babbled I unwound the film and put it in my front pocket with the first roll.

"Gotta go Madra. I'll come back tomorrow. We're friends, don't worry, I'll come back." Madra's eyes seemed to swell. He started yelling violently in Hindi. I stepped back, stared at his mouth and felt hypnotized. It moved so fast, like in high speed, chomping out words that to my ears said, "blah blah blah blah blah," but to my mind said, "You're doomed, kaput, finished!"

I grabbed the camera bag by my feet and ran through the doors. I bent down to pick up my shoes (which had to be taken off as Madra's place is considered "sacred" grounds) and suddenly



A street merchant of Kathmandu.

noticed a crowd of dark tempered faces staring up at me. Something hard hit the right side of my face by my ear. I can't say I really felt any pain, I just heard the ringing. I turned and saw one of Madra's servants holding a piece of wood. Over his left shoulder two policeman in tan uniforms were pushing through the crowd. I remember thinking, "Of course I'm innocent for Christ's sake. I'll just explain to them the whole story, they look like understanding guys..." Almost upon me the two policeman pulled their clubs from their belts. "...I'm outta here."

I shoved frantically through the crowd and sped down the steps. It was nearly impossible to run carrying so many things so I ditched the shoes. Then I pulled my camera bag from around my neck and swung it far into the woods. I sprinted barefoot over the Bagmati bridge, past my bike and into town with my camera in my right hand and two rolls of Fuhichrome 400 in my pocket.

I slept off my headache for the entire afternoon and into the evening. Close to midnight I walked back to Pashupati for my bike and possibly my camera bag. I knew the shoes were on someone else's feet about eleven seconds after I dropped them.

Under the pale and lurid glow of a full moon I found my camera bag in the woods, surprisingly un-touched by people or monkeys. My filter, lens caps and some extra film had been stolen from the bag by Madra sometime during the course of his performance. In their place, tucked into the bottom of the camera bag's outside pocket was a cube of raw hash wrapped in clear plastic. Evidence meant to be discovered by the police.

The next day at work I told the sadhu the entire story. He leaned back in his bed and dropped grains of rice in a swallows nest built next to the window.

"It's not over," he said.

"Why?"

"What day is today?" he asked.

"It's Friday."

"So you have two more days left in Nepal. Good. Tomorrow morning at 6:00 meet me here. We're walking Dhakshinkali." I get itchy when people are vague for no apparent reason so I griped with the sadhu until he told me more.

"Madra is a.....what do you say....he's what the Buddhists call a shaman. A shaman uses magic to cure sick people."

"Like a witchdoctor?"

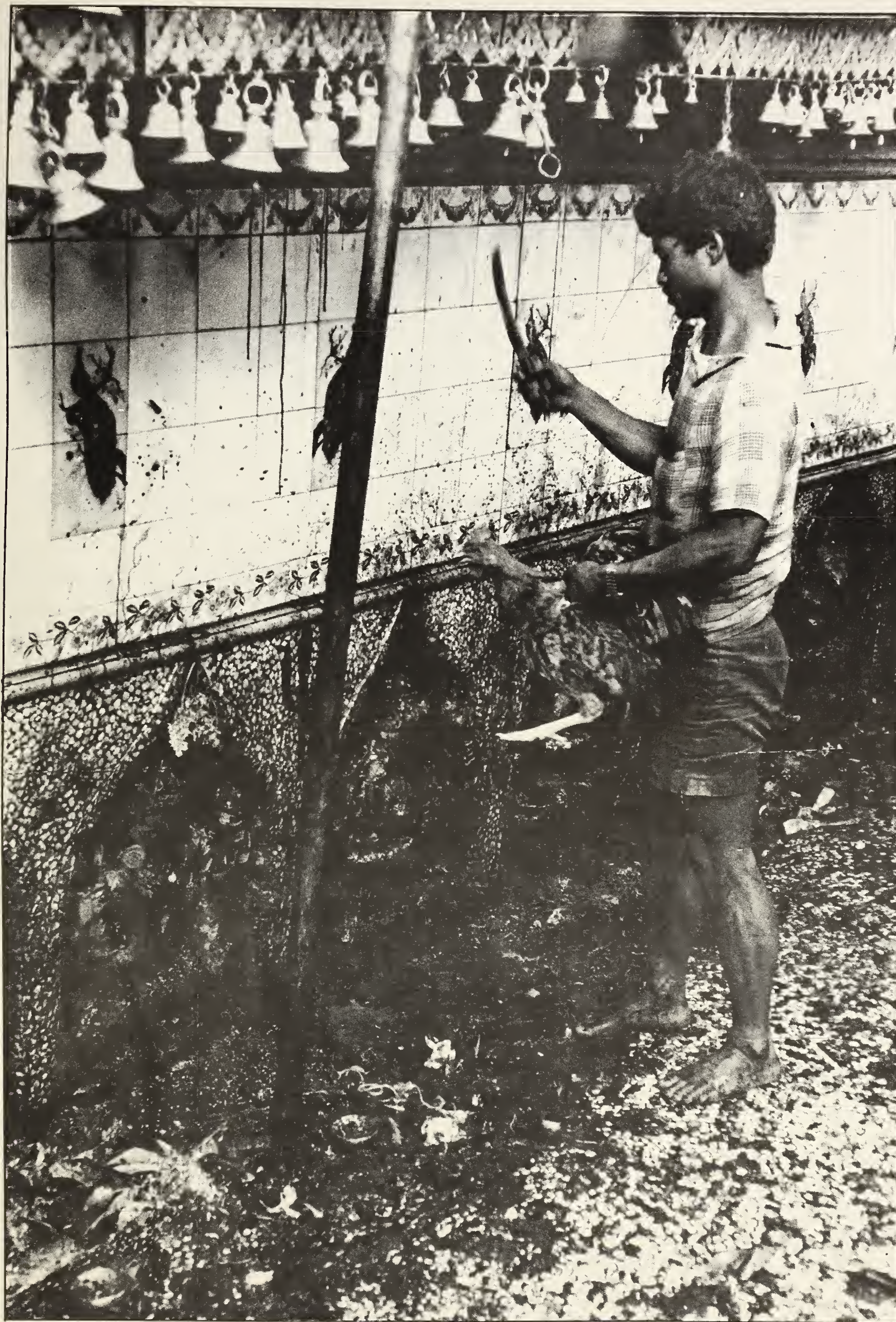
"Yes, but they also use magic to change events in persons life. And in this case you're the person."

"So what's in Dhakshinkali?"

"Ritual sacrifices....goats, chickens, small animals. We need the blood for Soma." I gave him a 'as if I know what a Soma is' look and he continued.

"An ancient sect called Verdic Aryans used to drink Soma after sacrifices, it helped them to see things, their gods. It was also meant to cleanse their bodies of evil spirit. After conflict with such powerful shaman it would be better if you drank Soma."





The sacrificer of Dhakshin or southern Kali prepares to remove the head of a chicken. Its blood will be sprayed onto the three foot high statues of Kali trampling a male human that adorn the lower wall. Already dark with blood the shrine walls will soon be covered and by the end of the day the sacrificer will be standing ankle deep in the blood of goats, pigs, lambs, ducks, and chickens.



I sat down on the sadhu's bed and waved my hands for him to slow down. He grabbed my hand and lowered his voice. "Babu, Madra has power to do things people of your upbringing don't usually believe in. A sadhu's curse is feared by everyone. He is truly gifted with vast and mystic powers of will. For your own sake we go to Dhakshinkali."

For a moment I began to question whether or not the sadhu was giving me the royal shaft. But after all that had transpired, and the honesty with which he spoke, it was too sincere to be some hocus pocus story made up to scare little children from messing with those evil shamans. The sadhu was telling me the truth.

Sister Cecelia called me to help finish washing the patients bedsheets. As I stood up the sadhu told me to say goodbye to the sisters and patients today. I wouldn't be coming back.

"Do you believe in magic?" he asked. I nodded yes. He seemed a little shocked at my answer. Shocked and happy.

The sadhu walked fast and steady in front of me. He used a walking stick and wore a long ocher robe that seemed to hover in the cool Himalayan breeze. He looked like Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai with his white beard and sandals, only we were going up, up along the hills that surround Kathmandu.

The mountain that Dhakshinkali rested on had been visible for the past four hours. It seemed mightier than the other 23,000 ft. mountains that encircled the hills and thus isolated Kathmandu. At first I thought it seemed that way just because it was our destination. But as we slowly moved closer its sides appeared much more jagged, its peak much more towering.

Wind was blowing snow from its summit into a thin white cloud off the right face. It seemed to make a noise, a deep moaning 'OOOOOOOOOMMMM-MMM' that only went away if you turned your head. But it was impossible to do that for long. The sheer power of its size made you stare, and when your knees started to hurt it gave them energy. It almost seemed to call you, to draw you to it as though you've been in love with it your entire life but never knew this until now. And that made you forget about the leaches dropping onto your neck and arms from the trees, about the 6,000 ft. drop one step to the left, and even about the U.S.A. and Baltimore and life after college. Only one thing mattered now and your entire body was dependent on it; getting to that mountain.

Our eight hour trek to Dhakshinkali made me understand why there is so much religion in Nepal. My sadhu had told me that the higher one goes up the Himalayas ones spiritual versatility increases. How right he was. The energy of those mountains runs through your body like a giant filter, leaving behind just you and your faith and all the time in the world to contemplate the bond between the two. It would be truly impossible to gaze upon these mountains and not believe in God. Atheism could never exist in the Himalayas.

The sadhu hesitated for a moment to gaze upon the miles of



A young Kirtipur villager rests quietly along the path to Dhakshinkali and the sacrifices.

rice patties that spread out below us like a giant quilt. The fields of the valley were as smooth and green as billiard tables. I could barely make out a Newari woman in a purple sari working on her crop. I watched her for quite some time, harvesting as peaceful and unconscious as one who already knows her future.

We made it to Dhakshinkali in late afternoon. Villagers were cradling goats and chickens down a thin rocky path that led into a tuft of trees. The path was outlined on both sides by Newaris selling garlands, oils and other sacrificial items.

Just outside of the trees the villagers were lined with their animals. We walked past them, down a few hundred steps and through a maze of crumbling without ceilings. The maze

ended in front of another series of steps at the bottom of which was a small courtyard.

We walked through its arches and stepped to the side so as not to obstruct the villagers proceedings.

The walls of the courtyard dripped in red. Inlaid into the walls were statues of various gods, their faces obscured by garlands, marijuana leaves and coagulated blood. A short, seemingly inappropriate villager was doing all the sacrificing. He grabbed a chicken from a peasant, tore off its head and put the body under his foot. Once it stopped twitching he gave it back and took a goat from the next person. He slit its throat and pulled back its head so that its nose was touching its spine. Blood shot in two streams from its neck and the sacrificer

sprayed the wall with it like paint. The run off dripped into a stagnant pool that was starting to harden on top like gravy at the Thanksgiving table.

I photographed the sacrifices in both color and black and white until it got dark. The villagers were too busy to even notice my camera so I shot freely. Not one person had questioned my nationality. My tanned skin, dark hair and moustache passed me for a Nepali.

While I was photographing the sadhu had been preparing his Soma. He came back into the courtyard, scooped some blood onto a large green leaf and pulled me out by hand.

We climbed the first flight of stairs and followed a narrowing hallway to an open room with three other Sadhus sitting





The Kathmandu Valley and surrounding mountains stretch out behind him.

around a pipe and bowl. It was much too dark to photograph so I sat down with the others and watched the sadhu scrape the blood into the bowl and mix it with a branch until it dissolved.

"What's in that?" I asked.

The sadhu didn't reply and opened his prayer book. The others did the same and read Sanskrit passages from yellowing pages.

The room was turning grainy and colorless. The first stars were already out but no light shone in the room. Their chanting went on for some time. I closed my eyes and lost track of how long.

When I opened my eyes a few candles had been lit and the sadhu's face flickered in black and gold. He was staring at me while the others appeared to be sleeping.

"The problem of human life and misery can be solved with reincarnation. Asceticism is the only form of salvation." He picked up the bowl and held it chin high like a priest blessing his offerings. The bowl was only half full and I realized the others weren't sleeping. They had drank their share and seemed to be in a trance.

"Your worth does not depend on who you are in this world. It depends on your awareness of the universal spirit. Your God, my god, they're the same. Having known him you'll become a muni, a sage, a wise one. Soma is also called Maueza Unala, Muni's intoxication. You drink Soma.....you attain fellowship with your God of the air. You'll travel with Him on His course.

He brought it slowly to his mouth, took three gulps and

held it out to me. I tried to hold it like the sadhu, on the tips of my fingers, but my hands were too shaky so I squeezed it in my palms. The sadhu's eyes were closed in prayer, a prayer for me I'm sure. I closed mine and took a single swallow. It was warm and thick and tasted a lot like herbal tea without enough water.

I laid down on my back and felt sick immediately. It wasn't a nauseous sick, but an all-over fever kind of sick. I tried desperately to block it out but couldn't. Everything was slowly turning black. The stars were gone and so were the sadhus. My entire body was getting damp and I was having trouble breathing. I was also having trouble remembering where I was. It was so dark, I could have been anywhere.

My breathing was getting faster and faster. It seemed the more air I took in the less I was getting. I was about five seconds short of spasing when I felt my body being lifted. The sadhu was carrying me out of the room. I remember thinking I was back in the patients corridor of the mission house. But now the roles were reversed and it was I who needed to be carried out by the sadhu. That was the last thing I remember before blacking out.

I awoke in another room similar to the first. The moon was out in full force and my surroundings were lit in pale blue. The room spun and moved at strange angles. I kept my eyes open long enough to see the sadhu sleeping in the corner.

When I awoke a second time everything was black again. It was so dark there was no difference between opening my eyes and shutting them. I still felt sick but for some reason was no longer frightened. Something was comforting me, something I couldn't see but knew was there. I strained to see what it was but only saw black. It didn't seem to be in one place but rather on all sides of me. I was about to reach out for it when my Sadhu put his hand on my face.

"Are you awake?" he asked.

"Who else is here?"

"Just me," he said.

"I don't feel well. I can't see."

"You can see all you need."

I suddenly remembered the sacrifices and all the picture taking I had done. "Where's my camera?"

The sadhu lit a candle and put my camera in my hands. I fumbled open the back to pull out my film but the camera was empty. "My film....it's gone." The sadhu dropped the roll of film in my shirt pocket.

"I took it out for you," he said. "You would have just ruined it." I was confused about what he said and then realized I popped open the back without rewinding the roll. The film would have been exposed.

I laid back down and clutched the film in my hand. The trance was wearing off but my sickness wasn't. Everything was there now, from nausea to fever, to aches to dizziness.

I felt so alone, so far away from anyone who could take care of me. My head was pounding and my stomach felt like it was bubbling into my chest. I leaned to one side and threw up everything I could. I slumped back down and the sadhu felt my head.

"Drink this," the sadhu said, holding up a cup.

"No."

"It's just water, believe me."

I grasped his hands which held the cup and for the first time the sadhu became an actual part of my life. I could feel how he cared, how he wanted to help, needed to help. He was no longer just an observer, he was there for me.

I also knew that he too was reversing the situation in his mind, just like I had while giving milk to the patients, so that he was feeling more; feeling how I hurt, feeling what it meant to be alone and scared. I was so close to my sadhu for those few moments, that I think he felt like he was dying with me.

I closed my eyes and his hands were those of someone I truly loved. He guided the cup to my lips and I drank.



